



TONTO NATIONAL FOREST

NEWS RELEASE

Tonto National Forest, 2324 East McDowell Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85006 www.fs.usda.gov/tonto

For Immediate Release
Oct. 19, 2012

Contact: Greg Schuster
602-225-5362

Public comments sought on
Outfitter-Guide Environmental Assessment
Deadline for comments: Nov.19

Phoenix (Oct. 19, 2012) – Tonto National Forest officials are seeking public comments on the Environmental Assessment to issue priority outfitter-guide permits and amend the Forest Plan to adjust outfitter-guide service day allocations. The comment period begins October 19 and comments must be received by close of business Monday, November 19, 2012.

Currently, there are separate service day allocation pools for priority and temporary use. A service day is any day, or part of a day, that an outfitter-guide client participates in a recreation activity such as hiking, hunting, or OHV riding on the national forest. When an outfitter-guide is issued a priority (up to 10 year) or temporary (6 months or less) permit, the company receives a service day allocation based on the activity it provides and the Forest Plan Management Area it operates in.

The action is to issue priority (up to 10 year) outfitter-guide permits for use on established roads and trails and in areas (e.g., river corridors) already authorized for priority use and to create a Total Service Day allocation pool.

The Total Service Day allocation pool would not exceed what is currently authorized in the Forest Plan for priority and temporary use. Forest Service permit administrators would use this Total Service Day pool to allocate use to existing and future priority permit holders, as well as to temporary outfitter-guide use that varies from year-to-year.

“This action is needed to improve service to the recreating public, better manage the outfitter-guide permit administration, and be in compliance with recent changes in national direction,” said Sharon Wallace, Public Service Staff Officer.

A copy of the outfitter-guide environmental assessment can be found at the forest web page at www.fs.usda.gov/tonto by clicking “Forest Projects” under the “Quick Links” column on the right-hand side of the page.

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Outfitter Guide comments, Oct. 19, 2012

Public comments about the proposal can be submitted by fax, mail, email, or hand-delivered (by close of business) no later than Monday, Nov. 19, 2012, 4:30 pm.

Attn: Outfitter-guide project leader
Tonto National Forest
2324 E McDowell Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85006

Fax: (602) 225-5295 (ATTN: Outfitter-guide Project Leader)

E-mail to: comments-southwestern-tonto@fs.fed.us. Subject line should read: “Outfitter Guide Project.”

All public comments must include a full name and a physical mailing address; all names and addresses become part of the public record. A scanned signature may serve as verification on electronic comments.

If you have any questions concerning the Outfitter-Guide Forest Plan Amendment, please contact Greg Schuster at (602) 225-5362, or gschuster@fs.fed.us

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The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world.